Bared cop spying

Daily News reports touched off probe

A series of stories in The Daily News touched off the police spy grand jury investigation that ended Monday with the presentation of a highly critical report to Criminal Court Judge Richard J. Fitzgerald.

State's Atty. Bernard Carey ordered the inquiry after a copyrighted story last March 20 detailed how undercover Chicago policemen had infiltrated a number of community groups, even assuming leadership roles in several of them.

In the following months, The Daily News published more than 20 exclusive stories detailing massive abuses of civil liberties and illegal conduct by members of the Police Department's Intelligence Division.

THE STORIES told how police maintained and circulated to other law enforcement agencies dossiers on persons who were never the subjects of criminal investigations.

The Daily News documented widespread political spying by police and the existence of an army of civilian informers paid by the deaprtment.

Other stories told of how Intelligence Division officers worked closely with — in some cases directing — a violent, right-wing terrorist group, the Legion of Justice.

THE STORIES sparked controversy.

Targets of police spying demonstrated and demanded that the activity stop — a request which was rebuffed by Police Supt. James M. Rochford.

Police officials and Mayor Richard J. Daley defended the practices and later said the Daily News stories were in part responsible for terrorist bombings that ripped downtown buildings twice in recent months.

The stories, they said, forced the department to curtail some of its intelligence work and, as a result, they did not know in advance of the bombings or who was responsible for them.

BEHIND THE stories was extensive investigation that began almost two months before the first disclosure.

Reporters Larry Green and Rob Warden investigated and wrote the stories. They received help from columnist Mike Royko and other reporters and editors.

The stories were based on official documents and sources within the intelligence community. Some police officers assisted in the investigation as did a few former military intelligence officers and a number of civilians who must remain unnamed to protect their identities.

Before each story was printed, it was verified by at least two independent sources.